Security, equality and problem situations

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If you want to read more about event security and/or equality, check HYY's Event security handbook and Equality in association activity -guide

Link to space information document (see section Equality in Events).

Principles of a Safer Place

We treat others as we would like to be treated
We take everyone into consideration, give everyone the floor and talk so that everyone can understand. We listen and respect everyone.

We don't make assumptions about others.
We do not make unnecessary assumptions about other people's identity, gender, sexual orientation, or other characteristics. Everyone's life situation and experiences are different.

We are open and listen
We strive to be open and open-minded towards everyone, because everyone is different. There is no room in Biosfääri for intolerance, violence or discrimination in any of its various forms! Intolerance, violence or discrimination are not acceptable under any circumstances!

We respect another's personal space
No means no. Everyone has the right to integrity. We don't bother anyone verbally or physically. We strive to be aware and interpretive in different situations so that no one feels uncomfortable.

If we notice a person in poor condition
We ask if the person is all right. We don't leave him alone, we take care of him ourselves or make sure someone else takes care of him. We remember that you can always ask for help

from the organizers. We take into account that the poor condition is not necessarily caused by intoxication, but we make sure that it is not a seizure. In case of emergency, we call 112!

If we experience or see harassment
We will try to inform the event organisers immediately so that harassment can be dealt with as quickly as possible. We can always contact the Equality Officers.

If we have offended others
We apologize and stop the unwanted behavior. We respect each other's experiences and boundaries. Everybody screws up sometimes. The most important thing is that we learn from our mistakes and try to understand the points of view of others.

If we need help, we ask for help.
In case of problems, you can and should ask for help. Organizers and harassment contact people always help. We can always contact the Equality Officers.

We think well of each other and relax 🙂

Equality in Events

Please ensure that there are more than one harassment contact person and/or event safety person at the events. For them, there are joint shoulder straps of Biosfääri's subject organizations, which allow them to be recognized by others. In addition, it is a good idea to display the phone number of harassment contact persons/event security persons (e.g. toilets) so that they can be contacted if necessary.

Biosfääri always recommends non-alcoholic options for alcoholic events as well. In sitsit, we recommend that each drink can be selected separately upon registration. This allows participants to better influence how much alcohol they want to drink. Plass cards can be marked with the drink choices of the participants in the traffic light model (green: alcohol-free, yellow: white wine, red: alcoholic / red wine) to make it easier to pour drinks in practice.

It is a good idea to add a description of the event to the event announcements so that everyone knows what it is all about. In addition, it is good to provide the equality and accessibility information of the premises in event descriptions and in Instagram comments. We've made a status document that can be viewed for help. Since the document is new, we ask that you fill in the information on the status of the document if it does not already have it. This makes it easier to organize events in the future.

An example of accessibility and equality information:

- Unisex toilet: yes / no
- Disabled toilet: yes / no
- Event accessible with a walker, a wheelchair, or a walking stick: [tell what can be used, and what cannot]
- Stairs, thresholds, ramp, elevator, seating?
- Alcohol served on behalf of the organizer: [traffic light model?]
- Harassment contact person: [contact details]
- Language(s) of the event:
- Noise, fragrances or special lights: [description]
- Possibility to bring an assistant or guide dog with you: yes/no

An example of event information:

- What, where, when
- Brief description of the event
- Content warnings (e.g. about a theme)
- Dressing instructions (e.g. weather preparation, dress code, etc.)
- Contact details and symbols of harassment contact people and event security personnel
- Safer space principles to be used at the event

Safety in Events

Before the event

- Keep a meeting on safety issues between the organizers, everyone is responsible!
    - Take safety into account when planning an event
    - Evaluate the probability of different situations in the context of the event
    - Decide fitting safer space principles and other principles for the event
- Get to know the essential materials
    - Event Safety Guidelines
    - Event facilities: emergency exits, fire extinguishers, meeting place, etc.
    - Previous Feedback
- Provide the necessary information for the participants
    - Content warnings (not being aware of the content can cause a medical or panic attack)
    - Dress code, e.g. weather preparation
    - Principles of Safer Space
    - Harassment contact people, event safety people and their contact details and identification marks
- Minimize the risks of the space
    - If possible, arrange a peaceful space at the scene to be directed to, e.g., a shocked person, an overly drunk participant, or the settling of a problem situation that has already occurred.
    - Pay attention to safety when decorating

    - Make sure the exits are clear.
- Prepare to act in problem situations
    - For example, take the contact information of security guards or bar staff (e.g., group chat rooms, etc.) and make sure that there is a enoughn battery in the phones.

In the event

- Make sure that there is water available
- Make a joint agreement with the organizers about serving alcohol to the (too) intoxicated
- When the risk realizes
    - Identify the situation, events and participants
    - Address and defuse the acute situation
    - Get the help you need (fire brigade, emergency care, police), the emergency centre can also provide instructions
    - Delegate Tasks
    - Try to Minimize the Unnecessary Audience
    - Take care of the situation until the end.
    - Interrupt the event if necessary (e.g. fire, drugging...)

Interrupting the event

If you feel that the event is out of control, you cannot take care of the safety of the participants! Such situations include drug abuse, drugs, the threat of violence or other escalation, or some other serious incident.

Make sure the participants are sober enough to get home. Finally, assess the need for post-processing.

Post-processing of the situations

Don't be alone with your experiences! Deal with situations in the organization so that the organizers are allowed to vent and reflect. If something went wrong, the matter is dealt with, and there is an effort to learn from it.

Communicating outwards in crisis situations

If something serious has happened at the event (e.g. a drugging case, other crime, fire, etc.) and the media are interested in the matter, contact HYY as soon as possible, e.g. a chief executive or organizational expert. They help assess situations and actions.

Also report what has happened to the party that rented the event space (if it is other than HYY), the faculty/university and Biosfääri.

More instructions on communication: After the event: Crisis communication (hyy.fi)

Safety risks

If in doubt, always call 112!
If there is a serious situation, like threat to someone's life, alcohol poisoning or a fire, always contact 112.

112:

- Tell them who you are, where you are and what has happened.
- Listen to the instructions and act accordingly
- Do not hang up the phone or leave the person in need alone!

Drugging at a bar:

- Make sure the victim gets to a safe place and gets first aid.
- Notify security and bar staff
- Consider whether it is sensible to interrupt the party. Is it possible to report what happened to other partygoers? How official is the event?
- Discuss with the bar in advance about their methods of operation

Harassment at a bar:

- Take care of the proper encounter with the victim.
- Afterwards, you can talk to the bar / security staff if the situation has been handled inappropriately
- Let's communicate with the co-organizations - it might not be worth using that bar as a place in the future

Too intoxicated / other in poor condition being participant:

- If someone is in such bad condition that they need a taxi, is it possible for the organizer to pay for the ride?
- Do not leave him alone, but take care that they get home safely!

Unknown person at an event:

- No open access:
    - Don't let strangers into the building. Contact the building's security service and/or the police at a low threshold
- Open access:
    - Avoid prejudice. Go and introduce yourself and ask with genuine interest who the unknown person is. Tell them about the principles and contact people of the event.

    - If the behavior is inappropriate, tell them about the common rules and discuss their behavior
    - If the conversation does not help, consider removing the person from the event

The situation is about to turn aggressive:

- Deal with the situation calmly, don't risk your own safety.
- Do not explain or question. Listen, and show compassion. If a person is talking, they are probably not violent.

The situation turns aggressive

- Call security and emergency services if necessary. You can always call 112 if you feel like it.
- Do not compromise your own or others' safety.
- Aim to get the person away from others so that the person is left alone in the space or the person is left alone outside the space.
- Don't follow them out or to the space, just wait for the security guard or the police.

Panic attack:

- Don't panic yourself, stay calm.
- If possible, take the person to a peaceful space
- Be present and patient, listen and try to help according to their wishes or your abilities
    - Help them focus on something else, such as counting numbers out loud
    - Help to calm their breath

Self-Destructive Behavior / Threatening with it:

- Try to prevent the chances of harming themself
- If possible, take the person to a peaceful space. Don't leave them alone. Listen to them.
- Call 112 and listen to the instructions.

Instructions for harassment contact people

Harassment contact people attempt to resolve situations by discussing, supporting the person who has experienced harassment, and possibly clarifying the situation with the other party. Harassment contact people act impartially and confidentially, and resolve situations without an unnecessary audience. Harassment contact people do not order punishments/sanctions, they are ordered by the organization's board.

Make sure you are functional and reachable.

General instructions:

- Introduce yourself at the beginning of the event and leave your contact information easily accessible, use the symbol (shoulder band)
- It's always okay to get in the middle of situations!
    - It is important to meddle with harassment situations. For example, you can get in the middle of the situation, join a conversation, or question inappropriate speech. If you are unsure, you can always ask if everything is okay.
- Stay as neutral as possible.
    - Believe the victim. Most of the harassment stays hidden and the experience of disruptive behavior is genuine.
    - Don't judge the other side. Also, hear their point of view and know that they may not realize that they have done wrong. Give a chance to correct the behavior.
- Discuss with the parties involved.
    - Try to support them in finding a solution, but don't solve the situation for them.
    - Remember, blame is not constructive. Communicate the experience: "X found it distressing when you ...."
- Trust your own knowledge and interpretation of the situation (you can screw up here too, but that's ok).
    - Would it be possible to make the matter go ahead with this processing or would it be necessary to take action and further discussion, with such as HYY's harassment contact person.
- The situations aren’t always resolved
    - This does not mean that you have failed. You can improve the well-being of a person that has encountered harassment already simply by talking with them.
- Ask for help!
    - It is also important that you take care of your own well-being and coping! In a difficult situation, you don't have to be alone.
    - Help is available e.g. from Biosfääri’s Equality Officer and HYY's harassment contact person.

Confronting a person who has experienced harassment:

- Support and listen to those who have been harassed.
- Take the person aside so you can discuss what happened in peace.
- Ask what kind of help the person who experienced harassment needs and how they would like to proceed in the situation. You can also offer options to help (e.g., if they just want to talk, or if they need you to discuss about the harassment with the accused, etc.)

- Sometimes a person does not want to clarify the situation immediately / clearing up is not recommended (too much agitation or intoxication). Make sure that the person who has been harassed is not left alone. Deiscuss when you'll get back to them.
- Know your own limits and always act according to your own coping! Situations are also burdensome for those who investigate them. Direct people to other aid providers if needed. Contact information can be found e.g. here.

Confronting a person accused of harassment:

The goal is to avoid conflict, and instead to create a mutual understanding of both what has happened and what is desirable in the future. Face the other side constructively and without blame, and give them a chance to learn from their mistakes and change their ways. After a joint conversation, you can assume that the opposing party knows how they should behave.

- Take the other party to the side and stay as calm as possible. Avoid conveying any kind of attitude, even if you have just heard them doing terrible things.
    - If it is not possible to have a peaceful discussion due to e.g. agitation / intoxication, get back to them as soon as possible, e.g. the next day.
- The other party may not realize that they have done anything wrong. Remind them of the principles that are followed in the organization or the event.
- Give constructive feedback and provide support on how to behave better in the future
    - If the behavior is not objectively wrong, do not blame or claim that the other party did something.
    - Explain how their actions can be interpreted as harmful or how it has caused anxiety to the other person.
    - Focus on actions and behavior. Emphasize that one party's experience is genuine even if the other side has meant no harm.
- If a person continues to behave inappropriately, the organization/organizer can make a decision to remove them from the event. It is worth contacting the person afterwards and discuss what happened.

Processing harassment notifications:

- Find out from both parties what has happened and treat both equally.
- Ask the parties how they would like to proceed with the clarification of the situation.
- If the parties so wish, organise a joint discussion (see next item, discussion between the parties).
- Follow the situation. Make sure that the agreed joint follow-up measures are adhered to.

    - You can contact the parties after a month, for example, and ask how things have been going.
- If the situation persists, agree on further action with the parties. Remember that you can always turn to a professional.

Discussion between the parties:

First, consider whether the situation is such that a joint discussion is appropriate to promote as a solution. The discussion may escalate easily, and ultimately be detrimental to all parties involved. If you feel that you do not have the competence to mediate the situation, contact HYY's Equality Officers.

Do not hold a discussion session if the harassment situation is serious: long-term bullying, suspicion of crime, etc. This requires strong professional skills. In such situations, direct the parties to other services.

You can use this HYY frame to help you: Guidelines for harassment situations: Discussion between the parties (hyy.fi)

Instructions for event safety people

Although event safety personnel are responsible for the safety of the event, remember that the responsibility for safety rests with all organisers. Get/call for help if needed. Be present and approachable, keep your phone with you, and stay functional.

Before the event

- Learn about the essential materials
    - Know the facilities of the event: emergency exits, fire extinguishers, meeting place, etc.
    - Read the instructions Safety at the event, Safety risks and Harassment contact person instructions
    - Check previous feedback
- Ensure that all organizers are aware of the safety instructions
- Be prepared to take action in problem situations
    - Take the contact information of security guards or bar staff, for example, and make sure that your phone is functional and has enough battery

At the event

- Introduce yourself, tell and share your contact information and show your symbol
- Observe the condition of people (no need to patronize)
- It is ok to intervene, and to make corrections! Preferably too early rather than too late.
- When the risk realizes
    - Identify the situation, events and participants
    - Abstain and defuse the acute situation
    - Get the help you need (fire brigade, emergency care, police), the emergency centre can also provide instructions
    - Delegate tasks
    - Try to minimize unnecessary audience
    - Deal with the situation until the end
    - Interrupt the event if necessary (e.g. fire, drugging...)

After the event

- Contact people related to the situation afterwards if the situation was not resolved/could not be resolved during the event
- Discuss the event with the organizers, and think about what can be improved
- Don't be alone with difficult experiences! Disassemble thoughts and events with other organizers, the Biosfääri board or HYY's harassment contact people, for example. Contact professional help if needed!